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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4499
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 1045
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0901
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1102

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CACS](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: FOUR CHRISTIANS KILLED IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

REF: A. A) 05 ADANA 191

[1](#)B. B) 05 ADANA 162, 05 ADANA 182, 06 ADANA 27

[1](#)1. (SBU) Three Turkish citizens and one German national were killed, and two injured, in an April 18 attack Christian bookstore in Malatya, a provincial capital about 600 kilometers southeast of Ankara. The victims were all affiliated with the tiny Protestant community that has developed in southeastern Turkey in the last five years. The Turkish citizens killed were Necati Aydin (leader of the church), Ugur Yuksel and one unidentified person. The German citizen was Tilman Geske. Contacts in the church told us that the attackers broke into the offices of Zirve Christian publishing house, tied up the employees and then slit their throats. All three died. One Turkish employee jumped out of the window in an attempt to escape, but died later in the hospital from injuries sustained during the fall.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Malatya governor announced that four individuals have been taken into custody. There is no information about the assailants, though the media reported that in the past a group known as the "Ulkucus" ("Idealists"), had criticized the group for publishing bibles. Zirve has also been harassed in the past by local authorities (reftel A) for publishing unauthorized or "pirate" books and attempting to sell them in local bookstores. Christians in Malatya have also reported to us that local Muslim clerics have spoken out publicly against Christians. The group has also reported harassment by fundamentalist Islamic groups. In response to the threats, the group moved offices about a year ago.

Local AmCit Reportedly Safe

[1](#)3. (SBU) We have reports that an AmCit (name unknown) is also affiliated with Zirve, but was not involved in the attack. We are working to contact him to confirm that he is safe.

Comment

[1](#)4. (SBU) On one hand, this incident has echoes of the 2005 murder of a Catholic priest in Trabzon and Hrant Dink's assassination in Istanbul this year, both of which were committed by ultra-nationalists. The method of this murder, however, is reminiscent of Al-Qaeda.

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